

Countering hate speech: a new challenge

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- EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION



On 26 January 2016, the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination held a hearing on the work on combating hate speech of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) with the participation of Mirosław Wyrzykowski, member of ECRI in respect of Poland, and Michael Whine, member of ECRI in respect of the United Kingdom.

“Hate speech and populism have created new challenges for governments”, said M. Wyrzykowski. He commented that while the precise extent of hate speech remained unclear because of a lack of reporting, it was certainly on the rise.



“Hate speech undermines the rule of law and is a threat to cohesion and democracy”, underlined M. Whine. “Strong legislative tools are essential and parliamentarians can make an important contribution to the fight against hate speech”, he continued. They

both highlighted the importance of education and awareness-raising among youth on the need to prevent and combat hate speech, including online.

In order to provide Council of Europe member States with a concrete policy tool, ECRI members recently adopted a General Policy Recommendation on combating hate speech based on good practices, soon to be made public.

The Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination will be working in the coming months on preventing and combating online hate speech, in the framework of the preparation of a report on “Ending cyber-discrimination and online hate” by Marit Maij (Netherlands, SOC). Combating hate speech is also one of the priorities of the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance.

- A video interview of Mirosław Wyrzykowski, ECRI member in respect for Poland
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